A

SERMON

Preach'd before the

KING and QUEEN

AT

WHITE-HALL,

MAY the 4th. M. DC. XC.

By *WILLIAM WAKE*, D. D. Chaplain in Ordinary to Their Majesties: And Preacher to the Honourable Society of *GRAYS-INN.*

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Οἶδα ὅτι λυπεῖ τὰ λεγόμενα, ἀλλὰ πολὺ κέρδος ἔχει κὴ ἄρατον. Ὁ πλησίος ἐκεῖνος, εἰ τίνα εἶχε τοιαῦτα αὐτῷ παραινοῦντα, ἐκ ἂν εἰς τὸν Γέενναν ἦλθεν ἐκεῖνον. —Ἀλλ' ἐπειδὴν τὰ πρὸς χάριν ἅπαντες διελέγοντο, παρέδωκαν αὐτὸν τῷ Πυρί. Chrysost. *Conc.* 2. *de* Lazar.

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LUKE xvi. 25.

But Abraham *said*; *Son, Remember that* Thou *in thy life-time receivedſt thy Good things, and likewiſe* Lazarus *Evil things: But now*, He *is* Comforted, *and* Thou *art* Tormented.

THE *words* are part of a *Parable*, in which our *Saviour Chriſt* ſets forth to us the different Methods of *God's Providence* in his diſpenſations to *Mankind*, with relation to the *Happineſs* of *this life*, and of *the Other*. That however he may here ſeem to ſcatter his *Bleſſings* at all adventures, upon the *Good* and *Bad* indifferently, and permit the *Wicked* to *triumph* in their Impiety; Yet there is a time coming when *He* will call them to a ſevere account for all their Actions, and *render to every man according to his Works*.

'*There was a certain* rich Man, *which was cloath-* Verſ. 19.
'*ed in purple and fine linnen, and fared ſumptuouſly*
'*every day. And there was a certain* Beggar, *named*
'Lazarus, *which was laid at his Gate full of ſores*;
'*And deſiring to be fed with the Crumbs which fell*
'*from the rich mans table: moreover the dogs came*
'*and licked His ſores. And it came to paſs that the beg-*

'*gar died, and was carried by the Angels into* Abra-
'ham's *bosome*; *The rich man also died, and was bu-*
'*ried. And in Hell he lift up his Eyes, being in tor-*
'*ments, and seeth* Abraham *afar off, and* Lazarus
'*in his bosome. And he cried, and said, Father* A-
'braham, *Have mercy on me; and send* Lazarus
'*that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and*
'*cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame.*

'*But* Abraham *said*; *Son, Remember, that* Thou
'*in thy life-time receivedst thy* good things,
'*and likewise* Lazarus, evil things: *but now*,
'He *is* comforted, *and* Thou *art* tormented.

It has been one of the oldest *Complaints* that we any-where meet with against the *Providence* of *God* in his managing the Affairs of this *lower World*, That He so often permits the *greatest Sinners* to be very *easie* and *prosperous*; whilst *better men* are forced many times to encounter with all the difficulties and discouragements, not only of a poor and despicable Fortune, but that too rendred yet more uneasie, by the *Injuries* and *Oppressions* which the wicked are suffered to bring upon ~~him~~. *them*.

If we look back into the *state* of the *World* before our *Saviour*; even then when it pleased *God* to make *temporal blessings* the encourage-

ment

ment to *Obedience*; yet we ſhall find nevertheleſs the beſt Men very frequently both wondring at, and complaining of the *inequality* of this *procedure*. *Truly*, ſays *Holy David*, Pſal. lxxiii. 1. *God is good unto* Iſrael, *even to ſuch as are of a clean heart*: *But as for me, my feet were almoſt gone,* Pſal. lxxiii. 1, —2, *my ſteps had well nigh ſlipp'd*: *For I was envious at* —3. *the fooliſh, when I ſaw the proſperity of the wicked.* And *Job* himſelf, thô ſo *patient* in his *own ſufferings*, yet could not forbear to expoſtulate with *God*, about the *flouriſhing condition* of *Evil Men*; Job xxi. 7. *Job* xxi. 7. *Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power?* And the beſt account could then be given of this matter was; That thô *Providence* did permit them to flouriſh for a while, yet it commonly brought ſome ſevere Judgment upon them at the laſt: And as the *Heathens* themſelves ſometimes obſerved, therefore raiſed them up to a height of *fortune* extraordinary, that their *Fall* might be the *greater*, and *more remarkable*.

This was what the *Prophet David*, after all his ſearch, acquieſced in, as the beſt Argument both to ſatisfy himſelf, and to vindicate *God Almighty*. *Surely*, ſays He, *thou doſt ſet them in ſlippery places,* Pſal. lxxiii. 18, *and caſteſt them into deſtruction*: *How are they* —19. *brought into deſolation as in a moment? They are utterly*

—20. *terly consumed with terrors: As a dream when one awaketh, so,* O Lord, *when thou awakest shalt thou despise their Image.* And again, in another *Psalm*; He gives this as the reason, why we should not be troubled at the *prosperity* which *wicked Men*
Psal. xxxvii. 1, seem sometimes to enjoy. *Fret not thy self be-*
cause of Evil-doers, neither be thou envious against
—2. *the workers of Iniquity; For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.* And *Solomon* not only insists upon the same Reason, but almost transcribes the very same words:
Prov. xxiv. 19, *Prov.* xxiv. 19. *Fret not thy self because of Evil*
—20. *Men, neither be thou envious at the Wicked; For there shall be no reward to the Evil Man, the Candle of the Wicked shall be put out.*

And the same was the Reflection which the rest of the *Holy Men* in those times contented themselves with upon this occasion. They saw but little of a *future state*, and of that Eternal Retribution *God* will hereafter make of *Rewards* and *Punishments*, to every one *according to his works*: And therefore they sought out that punishment for *Sinners* in this *World*, which they could not so certainly assign to them in the *other*.

Nor indeed was this any more than what the Tenor of the *Law* it self directed them to. For it having pleased *God* to set before them the *promises*

miſes of this *preſent life*, as the *rewards* of their *Obedience*; and by the *threatnings* of *troubles* and *diſappointments*, of *loſſes* and *afflictions* now to be undergone, to affright them from ſin: It was but natural for them to be ſurpriſed, when contrary to all this, they ſaw *wicked men* in great *Proſperity*; And to conclude according to what both the *Law* of *God*, and the *Methods* of his *Diſpenſations*, and their own *Experience* led them to do, that their *happineſs* ſhould not be of any *long continuance*; but, as the *Pſalmiſt* expreſſes it, in the *Pſalm* I before mentioned, Pſ. xxxvii. Pſal. xxxvii. 36
35, 36. *I have ſeen the wicked in great power, and ſpreading himſelf like a green bay-tree: Yet he paſſed away, and lo, he was not; yea I ſought him, but he could not be found.* —— 37.

Such was the *Caſe* even of the beſt men heretofore under the *Law*: And I ſhall not need to ſay, how apt we all of us are, to complain of *God's Providence* upon the ſame account even now. And if not with the *Sceptick*, to take occaſion from hence to diſpute whether he has any concern at all for the *Affairs* here below; yet at leaſt with *Jeremy* to reaſon ſometimes with him of his doings, *Jer.* xii. 1. *Righteous art* Jer xii. 1.
thou, O LORD, *when I plead with thee, yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments; Wherefore doth the way of the wicked proſper?*

But the *Inſtance* of the *Text* explains the difficulty, gives a final *ſatisfaction* to all our *doubts*, and for ever *ſilences* our Complaints; and *vindicates* both the *Juſtice* and *Goodneſs* of *God Almighty*. Whilſt drawing aſide the *vail* which hung before their eyes, it gives us a clear proſpect of a ſtate of things, beyond the narrow bounds of this *preſent World*. A *State* where all theſe ſeeming Irregularities ſhall be ſet to rights: Where the *Sinner* ſhall be diveſted of all his preſent *happineſs*; And the *Greatneſs*, the *Riches*, the *Pleaſures* he now enjoys, expire into the *ſad reſult* of that *Sarcaſtick* Conceſſion, which *Solomon* once made to the wicked in his days; *Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth; Walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the ſight of thine eyes: But know thou, that for all theſe things, God will bring thee to judgment.*

Eccleſ. xi. 9.

Nay, but the *Text* carries us yet farther: It not only ſets before us the different ſtate of the poor deſpiſed *Lazarus*, and the rich *Voluptuary*, in the *other world*; thô that had been ſufficient to *juſtifie* the *Providence* of *God*, both for all the *Good* which the *One* had received, and for all the *Evil* which the *Other* had ſuffer'd here on *Earth*: But ſeems in great meaſure to repreſent

preſent to us their ſeveral conditions in this *Life*, as the very *Ground* and *Reaſon* of their different Portions in the other. *Son, remember, that* Thou *in thy life-time haſt received thy* Good things, *and likewiſe* Lazarus Evil things; *but now* He *is* comforted, *and* Thou *art* tormented. He does not tell him of the *Abuſe* he had made of his *Riches*, in employing them only upon his *Pride* and *Senſuality*. He reproaches him not with his *Uncharitableneſs*, that could let this poor man lie and periſh at his *Gate*, and not take ſo much notice as his very *Dogs* did of him. No; he repreſents to him only the *Happineſs* he ſometime enjoyed whilſt he was in this World; and the Grandeur and Jollity in which he lived in it: As if a *continued ſtate of Proſperity* in the *preſent life* were almoſt incompatible with the Bleſſings and Glories of the other.

And however I ſhall not preſume to be ſo raſh, as to make a general *Rule* of this Remark; That thoſe who are *Great*, and *Rich*, and *Honourable* now, are not to expect any further *Portion* hereafter: And, *God* be thanked! have Inſtances at this time before my eyes, that I am perſwaded, would be ſufficient to confute the uncharitableneſs of ſuch a *Concluſion*: Yet thus much I may take leave to obſerve from it;

That ſuch Perſons as theſe, ſhall of all others the *moſt hardly be ſaved.* And therefore that we ought to be ſo far from cenſuring *God's Providence* for diſpenſing ſo large a ſhare of theſe *Bleſſings* to them, or from envying of them upon any ſuch account; that we ſhould rather pity their danger, who are beſet with ſo many more and ſo much greater Temptations than other men; And muſt therefore take a great deal more care and pains, be much more watchful over themſelves, and zealous in their duty; or elſe what we falſly call their *Happineſs*, may prove their *ruin* to all *Eternity.*

It was a ſevere Cenſure which our *Saviour* once paſs'd upon the *Riches*, and I fear I may extend it to all other the like advantages, to the *Honours*, the *Power*, the *Pleaſures* of this world;

Mat. xix. 23. Mat. xix. 23. *Verily I ſay unto you, that a* rich man *ſhall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

——24. And again, ver. 24. *I ſay unto you, It is eaſier for a Camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven.* And when his *Diſciples* thereupon began with ſome

——25. *amazement* to ask of him, *Who then can be ſav'd?* We do not find him at all moderating his Reflection. He tells them, that it was indeed poſſible for ſuch a one to be ſaved: But it was like

removing

removing a mountain, or *raising a dead man to life*. A work to be done only by a *Miracle* of *God's Grace*; not after the ordinary manner of other men, but by that *mighty Power* which makes nothing impossible to a *Divine Agent*: Jesus *said unto them, With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.* ——26.

And this is that which I shall now endeavour both from the *Remark* and the *Example* of the *Text*, more particularly to represent to you. I am sensible that I am now speaking to Persons of a more than ordinary *Fortune* and *Character* in the *World*. And I know how much harder it will be, without great care, for such to be *saved*, than for those of an *Inferiour degree*: And therefore how necessary it is, that they should be fully convinced and perswaded of it. And I am not in the least apprehensive, that I shall at all *discourage* their *Piety* by such an Undertaking. It is the Honour of *Great* and *Generous* minds to be *brave* and *daring*. The *difficulties* that would affright others, serve only to animate and encourage them the more to overcome them. And this *Promise* they have from *God Almighty*, That as their task is more difficult than other mens, so shall his *Grace* be dispenced to them in a *greater* and more plentiful

ful *Degree*. So that if they be not wanting to themselves, he will not fail to assist their Endeavours: He will bless them with an extraordinary measure of his *Grace* now, and will *crown* them with *a more Exceeding and Eternal weight of glory* hereafter.

For the better clearing of all which, I shall observe this *Method*:

I^st^. I will shew, How much more difficult it is for those who are *Great*, and *Rich*, and *Powerful*, to be saved, than for other men? And upon what *Grounds* it is, that it becomes so?

II^dly^. I will consider what Influence such a *Reflection* ought to have upon all *sorts* of *men*,

1. Upon the *One*, to stir them up to a greater *Care* of their *future Happiness*.

2. Upon the *Other*, to engage them to a patient Acquiescence even in the *meanest Condition*.

And, I^st^. I am to shew, How much more difficult it is for those who are *Great*, and *Rich*, and *Powerful*, to be saved, than for other men? And upon what *Grounds*, and for what *reason* it is that it becomes so?

Now

Now this will appear from these two *Considerations*;

1*st*. Of that *Obligation* which those who enjoy these *Advantages* lie under, to a more *strict* and *careful Discharge* of their *duty*, than other men. And

2*dly*. Of those *Temptations* which these very things many times bring along with them, to the ruining of such persons: Whilst instead of *ministring* to their *Piety*, and so *encreasing* their *Reward*, they serve rather to *expose* them the more to *danger*; and in the consequence thereof, become oftentimes the greatest Occasion of their *Eternal Destruction*.

For if such *Persons* as these have a larger and more comprehensive *Duty* to fulfil, upon the account of these *Advantages*, than other men; And if these very things which thus encrease their *duty*, are also at the same time apt to prove the greatest Lets and Hindrances to them in the performance of it; nay perhaps become even Snares and Temptations to them to draw them aside from it: 'Tis then a plain case, that their condition must be more dangerous than that of *ordinary Christians*, who neither *lie* under such *Engagements*, nor are *exposed* to such *Temptations*.

And

And 1*ſt*. That *thoſe* to whom *God* has given theſe *Advantages* above *other men*, do thereby become engaged to a *more ſtrict* and *careful diſcharge* of their *duty* than *others*.

For proof whereof I ſhall need go no farther than that great *Evangelical Rule* of our *Bleſſed Saviour*, Luke xii. 48. *That unto whomſoever much is given, of him much ſhall be required; and unto whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.* He was ſpeaking in the *Verſe* before, of the Difference which God would make in his exactions hereafter, according to the different degrees of mens *Knowledg* and *Capacities* now. *That ſervant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himſelf, neither did according to his will, ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes; but he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of ſtripes, ſhall be beaten with few ſtripes.* And the ſame is the caſe in all other *Advantages* whatſoever: Whether they be the *internal* aſſiſtances of *Grace* and *Knowledg*; or elſe the external Bleſſings of *Honour*, *Riches*, *Authority*, and the like; Whatever the *inſtance* be, whereby it pleaſes *God* to enable us to do more good, and make a more plentiful return of *Duty* and *Service* to him than other men, our Account ſhall be required in proportion thereunto, and to *whom God has committed much, of him he will ask the more.* So

Luke xii. 48.

Verſe 47.

So that now then to prove that there is a greater and more extenſive *Duty* incumbent upon ſuch *Perſons* as theſe I am now ſpeaking of, than upon the *ordinary ſort of Chriſtians*, I ſhall need only to ſhew, that *God* has given them a *greater Capacity of doing Good*; and that by conſequence it muſt be their own fault, if they do not make a return, in ſome meaſure at leaſt, proportionable thereunto.

1. And the *Firſt Advantage* that I ſhall mention is that of *Time*: And which however I fear at preſent but little regarded by many of us, is yet without queſtion not only a very valuable thing in it ſelf, but ſuch a *Bleſſing* as whatever we do now, yet the hour is coming when we ſhall All begin to put a juſt Eſtimate upon it. And when I conſider the great buſineſs a *Chriſtian* has to do in this World, What *Duties* to fulfil? What *Luſts* and *Paſſions* to overcome? How many *Difficulties* and *Temptations* to encounter with? And then think, How ſhort our *Life* at the beſt is? What Accidents may arrive to throw us the next moment into the *Grave*? How much of our *time* the *Neceſſities* of our *Nature* deprive us of? How much more is ſtollen from us by the unavoidable Obligations which the *Buſineſs* and *Converſation*, and too often the *Ceremonies* and

Impertinence of the World lay upon us? To ſay nothing now of our very *Vanities* and *Sins*; Which yet I fear in all of us have their ſhare, and in many of us a very large one too, to their Service: I muſt confeſs there is nothing wherein I could ſooner chuſe to envy the *Happineſs*, of thoſe above me, than in this one *Advantage*; tho' ſuch as Moſt of them ſeem to put the leaſt value of all upon, and ſuffer very little occaſion to deprive them of.

And for the Opportunity which ſuch Perſons hereby have the better to improve their *Piety*, and pay a more conſtant and regular Attendance upon the Offices of *Religion*; it is ſo very evident, that I ſhall not need to ſay any thing in proof of it. Whilſt being freed from thoſe *Neceſſities* under which Others labour; and the ſupplying whereof not only fills up the greateſt part of their *time*, but too much poſſeſſes their very *Hearts* and *Affections* too: Which being forced to converſe ſo much with the Affairs of *this World*, become thereby not a little indiſpoſed to entertain themſelves with the Joys and Bleſſings of the other; They are infinitely more at *liberty*, as well as exceedingly more *engaged* to lift up their *Minds* and *Deſires* to *Heaven*, and to bleſs that *God* who has ſo highly favour'd them above the reſt of *Mankind*;

Mankind; and to ſpend that *time* in the more excellent purſuits of the *Glories* of their *future ſtate*, which they have no need to do in a ſolicitous care for the ſupport of their preſent condition.

But I muſt go yet farther: For ſuch Perſons as theſe have not only more *Time*, & ſo a greater *Opportunity*, as well as higher Engagements to ſerve *God*, and work out their *Salvation*, than the ordinary ſort of *Chriſtians*; but they have moreover *better Capacities*, and *larger Abilities* to do Good, than *other Men*. For,

2*dly*. If we conſider them in themſelves, and their perſonal Qualifications only, there is often ſeen *another kind of Spirit* in them, than what we find in the *common* and *vulgar* race of Mankind. Whether it be that from the beginning they are accuſtomed to a more generous ſort of Life, and bred up with other *Maxims* and *Notions* of things, than thoſe of an Inferior Order: Or that it pleaſes God, to their greater Opportunities of ſerving him in all other reſpects, to give a better and more excellent Capacity too, to theſe than to other Men: But this is plain, that ſomething there is in the very *Temper* and *Diſpoſition* of thoſe of a higher Rank, more generous and excellent than what we or-

dinarily meet with in thoſe Below them. Their *Thoughts* are more *elevated*, their *Deſires* more *noble*; their *Reaſon* more *improv'd*; And by ſtanding upon a higher Ground, they ſee further than commonly Others do, whoſe very *Hearts* and *Minds* are many times as mean and groveling as their *Fortunes* and their *Employments*.

And to all which if we add, what ſuch Perſons for the moſt part have, the great happineſs of a better and more ingenuous *Education* too: It cannot be doubted but as this muſt needs put a very great difference in all other reſpects between thoſe of a *Higher Quality*, and the common Crowd of *Mankind*; ſo does it at the ſame time exceedingly better fit them for the *Service* of *God*, and for more high and extraordinary Attainments in the ways of *Piety* and *Religion*.

It is indeed very ſad to reflect how ſmall a *Senſe* too many of the *Meaner ſort* of the *World* ſeem to have of *Religion*. And one would almoſt wonder how perſons bred up in a *Church* where the *Goſpel of Chriſt* is ſo duly and plainly preach'd to them; Where the *Holy Scriptures* are read to them in their own *Tongue*, and put into their *Hands* for their own private Uſe and Meditation; ſhould nevertheleſs ſo many of them remain

main as ignorant of the first principles of their *Religion*, as if they had never enjoyed any of these opportunities of being instructed in it.

But then there is this to be said for it; That neither their *Parts* nor their *Education* enable them, nor will the necessary affairs of their Lives permit them to have so distinct and thorough a knowledge of the *Mysteries* of the *Gospel*; Of the *Love of God*, and the *Merits* and *Satisfaction* of our *Redeemer*; Of the *Terrors* of the *final judgment*; And what the *glories* or *miseries* of another World import; And what mighty obligations all these things lay upon us to *live well*, and *to depart from all iniquity*.

And yet even among these, we may find many who are *zealous* for *God's Service* beyond what one could almost have expected from them. That improve every Opportunity, suffer no Occasion to slip them that they can possibly steal from their present employments, to *encrease* their *knowledge*, and to *exercise* their *piety*. How much more ought those to whom *God* has given so many more and better *opportunities* to do this; Whose *Souls* are more raised, Whose *Understandings* more enlarged, Who know the *Mysteries* of *Christ's Kingdom*, What *promises God* has made to assist our *piety*, and What *blessings* he has *prepared* for ever to *reward* it, to be in an extra-

ordinary

ordinary manner careful of themſelves: And not ſuffer theſe *poor Souls* to riſe up in the judgment againſt them and condemn them, for that being ſo much better *fitted*, to diſcharge their *duty*, and having ſo much more *liberty* to do it than they; they have nevertheleſs ſo groſly neglected their *Souls*, and taken no care to *exceed*, or it may be even to *equal* them in *well-doing*.

But 3*dly*, Such perſons as theſe, have not only more *Time*, and a better *capacity*, than thoſe of a lower degree; but what is yet more, they have in many reſpects, a greater *Ability* too of *Doing Good*, and of promoting the *Intereſts* of *Piety* and *Religion*. And that eſpecially upon theſe Three Accounts,

(1*ſt*) Of their *Riches*.
(2*dly*) Of Their *Authority*.

And in the conſequence of both theſe,

(3*dly*) Of their very *Example*.

(1*ſt*) If we conſider them as *Perſons* of *larger Fortunes*, and more *plentiful Eſtates*, than other *Men*; How many *Advantages* will this one thing miniſter unto them for the better advancing the

Service

Service of *God*, and the *Intereſts* of *Chriſtianity*? What influence will this give them not only over their own Houſes, but over multitudes abroad who ſome way or other depend upon them, and need only their encouragement to become religious?

To paſs by all other *Benefits*, and offer but one Inſtance inſtead of many. It cannot be doubted but that the more it has pleaſed *God* to diſpenſe to any one of theſe things, the more he not only is able, but ought in duty to lay out in the Exerciſe of that moſt excellent *Vertue* of *Charity* and *Beneficence*; and than which I know not whether there be any more *acceptable* to *God*, or more advantageous to our *Eternal Salvation*. And though there is ſcarce any ſtate ſo mean as to be utterly exempt from all diſcharge of it; yet they are the *Rich* and *Wealthy*; Thoſe to whom *Providence* has been *free and liberal* no leſs to ſet them an *Example* what they ought to do to others, than to *enable* them to Do it; whom we are to look upon as the chief *Stewards* of *Heaven*, and diſpenſers of its bleſſings to the *poor* and *needy*. And therefore S. *Paul*, though he recommends a *Chriſtian Charity* to all, and paſſes by none in his Exhortations to it; yet we may obſerve that they are ſuch as theſe whom he bids *Timothy* in a particular manner call upon

1 Tim. vi. 17. upon not to be wanting in it: *Charge them that are*
— 18. *rich in this world*---- that *they be rich in good works;*
—19. *ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.*

For the next instance, (2*dly*,) that of *Power* and *Authority*: I shall not need to say what a mighty *Advantage* this also gives to such *persons* of doing more than ordinary Good, by obliging Others to become so. And indeed I cannot tell whether there be any more truly *beneficial*; but sure I am, a more *noble* and *worthy* Use there cannot be made of any *Power* or *Authority* we may have committed to us, than for the promoting the *Glory* of *God*, the *Salvation* of *Mens Souls*, and a *publick sense* of *Piety* and *Religion* in the World. And how those to whom *God* has given so glorious an *Advantage* as this of serving him, in a more than Ordinary manner, will be able to excuse themselves at the *last day*, if they do not especially employ it to this *best* of *Ends*, I must confess I do not see: Nor can I perswade my self, that a *private Piety* is all *God* will exact of such persons, in whose power it was in some measure to have *reformed the Age*; and if not to have made it *Good*, yet at least to have kept it from being openly and scandalously *wicked*.

Nay,

Nay, but (3*dly*,) And to close this Point: Should those whom we are now speaking of have no such *Advantages* as these, in point either of *Riches* or *Authority*; which nevertheless I believe but few of them want: yet still the very influence of a Great Mans *Example* is beneficial. It not only strikes mens *Eyes*, but for the most part, I know not how, *charms* their very *Hearts* and *Affections* into a *Love* first, and then into an *Imitation* of it.

There is nothing more ordinary in the common practise of the World, than for those of an *Inferiour Rank* to take their measures from such as are above *Them*. 'Tis this makes *Sin* its self become reputable, when countenanced by the *Examples* of the *Great* and *Honourable*: And the *Commands of God*, and all the *Terrors* of *Eternity* are too weak to prevail against the *Power* of *Vice*, when got into Credit and Custome among such persons. How much more might we hope to see *Piety* and *Religion* revive among us, would the *Princes* and *Nobles* of our *Israel* seriously resolve to set the *Example*: And make *Vertue* as necessary to a good *Esteem*, and *Interest*, and *Reputation* with Men, as it is to gain the *Love* of *God*, and the *Blessings* and *Glories* of *Eternity*?

And thus have I consider'd very briefly a few of those *Advantages* which oblige Persons of Great *Authority*, and *Fortune* and *Quality* in the World, to a more strict and careful discharge of their Duty than other men. Let us see,

2*dly*, What the *Effect* of all this generally is. And whether these very *things* at the same time that they thus lay a greater *Obligation* upon such Persons, are not apt, considering the evil Inclinations of corrupt Nature, to be perverted to a quite contrary purpose; both to *tempt* them first, and then to *enable* them to be more highly *Criminal* than other men?

In speaking to which *Point* I presume no One will so far misunderstand me, as to think I have any design to make an *Apology* for the *Sins* of *Great Men*, by shewing what extraordinary Dangers and Temptations their very condition often times exposes them to. For though where there is a sincere desire, and an hearty Endeavour to live Well, this Consideration perhaps may, and I doubt not shall prevail with *God* to make greater Allowances for the *slips* and *infirmities* of such persons, than of those who have not

not so many Difficulties to encounter with; Yet cannot this be any Excuse for those who by this means suffer themselves to be utterly drawn away from their *Duty*, and engaged in a *Course* and *Habit* of *Sin*: But on the contrary, will aggravate *their Guilt the more*; for that knowing their *Danger*, They *nevertheless* neglected to look to themselves, and to take that due care they ought to have done to preserve their *Innocence*.

And 1*st*, For the *first Advantage*, that of *Time*: I have before observed, that this is a *Benefit* which such *persons* seem to put the least *Value* of all upon, though one of the most *considerable*; and I must now add, that being thus neglected by them, it proves for the most part a Snare and a Temptation to them: And this is one of the chiefest Causes of their *Sin* and *Ruine*.

The man who lives by his *Industry*, and *in the sweat of his brow eats his bread*; he wants indeed the Opportunity of paying that constant Attendance which others may do, upon the Solemn Exercises of *Piety* and *Devotion*. His Thoughts are taken up with the Affairs of this Present Life, how to carry on his business, and supply his needs. And this hinders his *Soul* from having *its Conversation* so much *in Heaven*; whilst his con- Gen. iii. 19.

cerns after the things of this *lower World* renders him very often unable, I had almoſt ſaid unfit to contemplate the Joys and Glories of the other.

But though he cannot therefore be ſo *active* in the *more immediate Service* of *God Almighty*, yet he ſpends his *time* in ſerving the *Order* of his *Creation*. He is *Honeſt* and *Innocent*; And his *Buſineſs*, though it hinders him from riſing ſo high in Religious Attainments, as thoſe who have Greater Leiſure may; yet at the ſame time keeps him from their Temptations too, and from falling into any *Great* and *Dangerous Irregularities*.

Whilſt thoſe who have more *Time* for the diſcharge of their *Duty*, and whoſe Thoughts and Conſiderations have no need to be thus employ'd upon an anxious ſollicitude after the *things* of *this World*, are yet oftentimes far enough from raiſing them up to thoſe of a better. They are *Idle* and *Lazy*: They look upon it to be one part of their *Birthright*, indeed the great *Priviledge* and *Characteriſtick* of their Condition, to have nothing to do; And then the *Tempter* never fails to ſtand ready for them: And Experience ſhews how eaſie the Tranſition is, from the *doing* of *Nothing*, or that which is as good as Nothing, to the *doing Ill*.

2. For

2. For the *Second Benefit*, that of *Quicker Parts*, and a more *ingenuous Education*; It is indeed an *Advantage* not ſo apt to prove a Snare to Men as the other; but yet ſuch as may be abuſed to very wicked purpoſes. And the *Church* has in all Ages had but too many *Inſtances* of this kind, to ſhew how much more capable Men of a *brisk Wit*, and a *Comprehenſive Knowledge*, are of being eminently Wicked, and doing a great deal of Miſchief to Religion than other Men.

What is it but this that has given Birth to moſt of thoſe *Satyrs* and *Paſquils*, wherein we find not only the *Myſteries* of *Chriſtianity*, but even the *Practice* of all *Religion* expoſed to ſcorn and ridicule? I ſhall not need to ſend you back to *Julian* and *Porphyry*, and the like profeſs'd Enemies to the *Chriſtian Faith* for Witneſſes of this. *Our* own *Age*, and even our *own Country*, has bred up thoſe who at the ſame time that they have call'd themſelves by the ſacred *Name* of *Chriſt*, have nevertheleſs bid defiance to his *Goſpel*; and eſteem'd it a piece of *Wit* and *Gallantry* to *burleſque Scripture*, and laugh the greateſt *Articles* of *Religion* out of *Countenance*. Who have employ'd their *Parts* only to find out ſome new Colours for *Scepticiſm* and *Infidelity*: To free themſelves from the *Practice* of *Religion* now, and to harden themſelves

ſelves againſt the *Fears* of *Damnation* hereafter.

Jer. v. 9. But *ſhall not God viſit for theſe things? Shall not his Soul be avenged on ſuch* Wretches *as Theſe?* Yes, the time is coming when he ſhall turn all their Laughter into Mourning, and bring thoſe *Evils* upon them they now pretend to *ſcoff* at the very Name of. And give them a ſad and Eternal Conviction how much they were miſtaken in their *Notions*, when they thought *Profaneneſs* to be *Senſe*; and to make a mock of *Sin* and *Damnation* the only ſure and approved Evidence of a Man of *Depth* and *Knowledge*: And that when all is done, what *Job* ſo long ſince obſerved is indeed the very Truth; *Behold, the Fear of the LORD that is Wiſdom, and to depart from Evil that is Underſtanding.*

Job xxviii. 28.

And when thus even Mens *Parts* and *Education*, thoſe beſt *Advantages* to *Vertue* and *Piety*, may be turned into a *Snare* and a *Temptation*; much more,

3*dly*, Will thoſe other *Benefits* yet remaining, of *Riches*, and *Power*, and *Greatneſs*, be found to fall under this Reflection; which are both infinitely more *Eaſie* to be *abuſed*, and not at all leſs able to miniſter to their greater *Guilt*, and in the con-

conſequence of that, to their more certain *deſtruction.*

The Truth is, whether we conſult our *Reaſon* or our *Experience*; What Uſe ſuch perſons commonly do make of theſe things; or What, without a great deal of Care, they will be apt to make of them; we ſhall find but too much cauſe to conclude what I am now aſſerting to be moſt true: That if on the one hand, *Riches*, and *Greatneſs*, and *Power*, are *Advantages* that both enable and engage thoſe who have them, to do much more good in their Generation than other Men; yet they may, and without very great heed, will be apt to expoſe them to many *Temptations* too; And inſtead of rendering them more excellently Good, make them only more exceedingly Wicked, than otherwiſe they either would, or could have been. And I ſhall not need to ſpend the time in a ſolemn proof of that which our *Saviour* thought to be ſo very plain, as to make it almoſt a *General Rule*, a kind of *Aphoriſm* in *Chriſtianity*; *That a rich man ſhall hardly enter into the Kingdom of God*: and of which, if you pleaſe, we will take the Inſtance of our *Text* for the Application; *Son, remember, That thou in thy Life time receivedſt thy good things, and likewiſe* Lazarus *Evil things*; *But now, He is* Comforted *and Thou art* Tormented. Mat. xix. 23.

And

And now to conclude this firſt *Point*: Is it thus evident, as we have ſeen, that perſons of a *greater Quality* and *higher Station* in the world, do lie under much greater Obligations, and have an higher and more difficult duty to fulfil than other Men? And have we ſo much Reaſon to believe, that thoſe very *Advantages* which encreaſe their *Obligations*, are at the ſame time but too apt to prove their greateſt *Lets* and *Hindrances* in the fulfilling of them? It muſt, then remain, that either ſuch perſons as theſe muſt take a great Care of themſelves, or they ſhall more hardly be *ſaved* than thoſe of an inferiour Rank: Whoſe *Duty* is more *Eaſie*, Whoſe *Temptations* are much fewer; Who have neither ſo great a *Task* to *fulfil*, nor ſo many *Difficulties* to encounter with in the fulfilling of it.

Which being ſo, let us Conſider,

II^dly, What influence therefore this Reflection ought to have upon All of us:

1. Upon thoſe who are *Great*, and *Rich*, and *Honourable* in *the World*, to ſtir them up to an *Extraordinary Care* of their *future Happineſs*.

2. Upon

2. Upon *all others*; to engage them to a *patient acquieſcence* even in the *loweſt* and *meaneſt Condition.*

1*ſt*, That the Conſideration of what we have now been diſcourſing, ought to ſtir up all ſuch perſons as theſe, to a more than *Ordinary Care* of their *future Happineſs.*

This is a conſequence, that if Men believe any thing at all of *another Life* after this, muſt be allow'd to be the natural reſult of what we have now been diſcourſing. For if both the *Duty* of ſuch *Perſons* be greater, and their *Temptations* ſtronger than other Mens; If God expects a more excellent Service from *Them* than from the *Ordinary ſort of Chriſtians*, and yet they are certainly expoſed to more Lets and Hindrances than Others uſually are, in the fulfilling of it: What then can we conclude but that it will undoubtedly concern them, as they tender their Eternal Welfare, to look very carefully to themſelves, that they neither come ſhort in their *Duty*, nor are carried away by the ſtrength and force of their *Temptations.*

But here therefore a *Difficulty* will ariſe; For if the *Caſe* be ſuch as we have now ſhown, and as indeed our *Saviour Chriſt* himſelf hath ſet it out

to us: If such *Persons* as These *shall hardly be saved*; and again, *It be easier for a Camel to go through the Eye of a Needle, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*: Will not this rather serve to *discourage* than to *heighten* their *Endeavours* after it? And lead them sooner to the
1 Cor. xv. 32. *Epicure's* Conclusion, *Let us Eat and Drink, for to morrow we shall die*; than to the *Christian* Resolu-
Luke xiii. 24. tion of *striving to enter in at the Straight Gate; because many will seek to enter in, and shall not be Able?*

This indeed seems to be a very reasonable *Objection*, and which ought to have a fair and satisfactory *Answer* made to it. And therefore,

1*st*, I reply: It is most certain, that were we to judge of this matter according to the Power of *Corrupt Nature*, there might be but too much Cause for such persons to give way to these kind of Reflections, and look upon their *Condition* as little better than *Desperate*. And so much our
Mat. xix. 26. *Saviour Christ himself* implies, *Mat.* xix. 26. *With men this is impossible*; that is to say, Were we to look no farther than our own *Natural Strength*, without considering what the *Grace* of God, and the *Power* of *his Holy Spirit* is able to do, we might well reckon the Difficulties that arise to hin-

hinder the *Salvation* of a *Rich* and *Great* Man to be inſuperable. But *With God*, *All things are poſſible*; He can make that which is thus difficult of its ſelf, become *Eaſie* to us, and remove all juſt cauſe not only of *Deſpair*, but even of *Complaint* from us, upon that account. And therefore,

2*dly*, I ſay, that ſuch *Perſons* as theſe ought not to be at all *diſcouraged* from the proſpect of any of theſe *Difficulties*, becauſe though their *Duty* be indeed *Greater*, and their *Temptations* more dangerous than other Mens; yet if they do but add their earneſt Endeavours, *God* will give them ſuch a *meaſure of* his *Grace*, as ſhall be ſufficient to enable them to overcome all their *Difficulties*, and to fulfil the *duty* that he requires of them. *Jeſus ſaid, With men this is impoſſible, but with God all things are poſſible.* As if He had ſaid, To enable a *rich man* to deſpiſe his *Wealth* in compariſon of his *Duty*; to ſupport him againſt the *Temptations* it expoſes him to, and to incline him to make that due uſe He ought of it: This is indeed a Work which *Humane Strength* either could not at all, or not without ſome extraordinary *difficulty*, be able to accompliſh. But let not this therefore diſcourage any of you; for though *Humane*

Strength cannot do it, a *Divine Power* can. And if there muſt be a *double portion* of *Gods Spirit* beſtow'd upon ſuch perſons, or they cannot be *ſaved*: Let them do their parts towards it; let them *pray fervently*, and *labour ſincerely* to diſcharge their *duty*, and they ſhall have a *double portion*, rather than they ſhall periſh for want of it. *God* will give them an *Aſſiſtance* ſuitable to their needs, and their *Grace* ſhall be as much greater than that of *Ordinary Chriſtians*, as their *duty* and *difficulties* are Greater than Theirs.

Nay, but this is not yet all: For, 3*dly*, *Our Saviour* not only aſſures us, that ſuch perſons ſhall have a *meaſure of Grace* proportionable to their *needs*, though that had been ſufficient to remove all grounds of *deſpair* from their *minds*: But to encourage them yet more to a *Carefulneſs* in their *duty*, he has promiſed, that if they do thus heartily labour to fulfil it, they ſhall not only have a ſufficient *aſſiſtance* from *God* to ſupport them now, but a more glorious Reward of their *Piety* hereafter. *Ver.* 27. Where when St. *Peter* remark'd to Him, how they had deſpiſed all their preſent concerns to *follow* him, and become his *Diſciples*; *Behold, we have forſaken all, and follow'd Thee*: *What ſhall we have therefore?* He not only pronounces a *Bleſſing* upon them for their *Piety*, *ver.* 28. *Ve-*

—27.

—28.

rily

rily I ſay unto you, that ye which have follow'd me in the regeneration, when the Son of Man ſhall ſit in the Throne of his Glory, ye alſo ſhall ſit upon twelve Thrones, judging the Twelve Tribes of Iſrael: But makes a *General Promiſe* to all others, that ſhould not ſuffer any of thoſe things they now have to draw them away from his Service, that they ſhould receive a more exceeding reward for it, *ver.* 29. *And every One that hath forſaken*, not only —29. that has *actually left* them, but hath in his *mind* ſo given them up, as to reſolve not to value any of theſe things in compariſon of his duty; *Every one that hath* thus *forſaken Houſes, or Brethren, or Siſters, or Father, or Mother, or Wife, or Children, or Lands for my Names ſake, ſhall receive an hundred fold, and ſhall inherit Everlaſting Life.*

And now when this is the *Caſe*; When ſuch *perſons* as theſe have not only a Promiſe, that *God* will endue them with a more *plentiful portion* of *his Spirit* than other men, and ſo render their *duty*, though ſo much *Greater* in its *ſelf* than that of others, yet *to them* as *eaſie* as our Leſſer Engagements are to us; Who as we have not their Difficulties, ſo neither have we the promiſes of ſuch an Aſſiſtance, as we ſee they have, to ſupport us: But are moreover aſſur'd, that their Piety ſhall receive a proportionable reward; They ſhall as much *outſhine* in

in us in the *Firmament* of *Glory* hereafter, as they now exceed us in their *Power*, and *Riches*, and in what is yet more valuable, their *Ability* of doing *Good*: It must certainly be very much their fault, and what will doubtless render them exceedingly more inexcusable than Other Men, if they be not in some measure as *careful* of *themselves*, and as *zealous* in their *duty* as all these excellent *Advantages* engage them to be; and as for other Mens sakes as well as their own, we ought to beseech them that they would become.

But this is not yet all the Use we are to make of these *Reflections*; Which ought not only to *encrease* the *Piety*, and *inflame* the *Zeal* of those above us: But at the same time,

2*dly*, To teach us, whom it has pleased *God* to place in a *lower*, but if we knew our own Happiness, a *no less blessed Estate*; to be *perfectly contented* with our Condition, though it should chance to be never so *low* and *mean* in the World.

For, since this present Life is but a *time* of *Tryal*, a *State* in which we are not to continue very long, and then whatever our *portion* here may be, if we do but manage our selves as we ought in it, we are sure we shall be exceedingly Happy in the other World: Wherefore should we *murmur* or *repine* a-

gainst

gainſt *Gods Providence?* As if *Eternal Glory* were not a ſufficient recompence for a little trouble and miſery in the purſuit of it.

I confeſs, I am not ſo great a *Sceptick*, as to go about to perſwade you, that there are not *ſome Advantages* in a plentiful portion of the Good things of this preſent World: Or that it is all one, whether a man be *poor* and *deſpiſed*, or elſe *Rich* and *Honourable* in it. But yet this I may affirm; that to him who is accuſtomed to think, and has a quick and lively apprehenſion of the *Happineſs* of the other Life, the wants of this will be very ſupportable. And while we can look up to Heaven, and there ſee the poor *Lazarus* in *Abraham's* boſome, we ſhall be able to find an *Argument* not only of Contentedneſs, but even of Comfort too in the Reflection; though we ſhould chance for the preſent to lie, as he once did, at the *rich mans door*, and *feed on the Crumbs that fall from his Table.*

And, Oh! that it would pleaſe God, we might all ſo ſeriouſly meditate on theſe things, that whatever our *portion* now be, we may have a bleſſed reverſion in *Heaven*; where alone *true Happineſs* is to be expected by us.

Conſider, I beſeech you, the *Time* is coming, it cannot be far off, when we muſt all lie down in the Grave: When the Rich and Mighty ſhall as certainly *die* as the *Poor* and *Miſerable*; and carry none

none of their *State* and *Grandeur* along with them. When all *titles* and *distinctions* shall be forgotten; and the *greatest Monarch* stand with as little Advantage before the *Judgment-Seat of Christ*, as the meanest of his *Vassals*.

And what will it then avail any of us, that we have been, it may be, *Great* or *Honourable* on *Earth*, if we must be from henceforth *Miserable* to all Eternity?

How shall we then begin to envy the *Blessed Fortune* of those men, whom we were wont to despise heretofore? We thought their *Condition* poor and miserable. We esteem'd them neglected of God, the scorn of *Men*, and out-cast of the people. But alas! now we see the difference; And how much more fortunate a poor Good Man is in the meanest Estate, than the Sinner in all the heighth of his most flourishing Condition.

And may we then every one of us so effectually ponder all these things, that whatever *temporal Blessings* we now enjoy, yet our portion may not be in them: Nor that be ever objected to us, which *Abraham* here called the *Rich Man* in our *Text* to consider;

Son, remember, that Thou in thy life-time hast received thy Good things, and likewise Lazarus Evil things; but now He is comforted and Thou art tormented.

FINIS.

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